

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) An apparatus for manipulating an orthopedic device having first and second baseplates, the first baseplate having a first vertebral body contacting surface and the second baseplate having a second vertebral body contacting surface, the apparatus comprising:

at least one shaft having a longitudinal axis and a shaft distal end adapted for engagement with the orthopedic device,

the shaft distal end further having forward surfaces for engagement with corresponding confronting surfaces of at least one of the baseplates for axial rotationally aligning the at least one of the baseplates with respect to the longitudinal axis in at least two of a plurality of possible axial rotationally aligned positions,

wherein each of such possible axial rotationally aligned positions aligns the longitudinal axis of the shaft with respect to a respective one of the corresponding confronting surfaces.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the forward surfaces of the shaft distal end are flat and angled with respect to one another for mating with the confronting surfaces of the baseplates, the confronting surfaces being correspondingly flat and angled.

4. (original) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the forward surfaces are angled with respect to one another at an orientation angle of approximately 33.4 degrees.

5. (original) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the forward surfaces are angled with respect to one another at an

orientation angle that facilitates engagement of the apparatus with the device in a plurality of rotated positions with respect to the device such that possible engagement orientations approaches include at least an anterior insertion approach and at least one anterior-lateral insertion approach.

6. (original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the forward surfaces are adapted for engagement with the device such that either an anterior-laterally facing forward surface and an anteriorly facing forward surface is mateable with any of an anterior-laterally facing confronting surface and an anteriorly facing confronting surface.

7. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the anteriorly facing forward surface is spaced from the anteriorly facing confronting surface when two anterior-laterally facing surfaces are engaged with two anterior-laterally facing forward surfaces.

8. (original) The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the anteriorly facing forward surface has a length greater than the anteriorly facing confronting surface.

9. (original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein engagement of at least two of the forward surfaces with at least two of the confronting surfaces significantly limits movement of the at least one of the baseplates relative to the apparatus.

10. (original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein engagement of at least two of the forward surfaces with at least two of the confronting surfaces substantially minimizes rotation

of either of the baseplates about a longitudinal axis of the device.

11. (original) The apparatus according to claim 1, the apparatus further comprising at least one vertebral body stop, wherein the stop prevents over-insertion of the device into an intervertebral space.

12. (previously presented) An apparatus for holding an orthopedic device, the orthopedic device including a first baseplate having a first vertebral body contacting surface and a second baseplate having a second vertebral body contacting surface, the apparatus comprising:

a shaft having a distal end and a longitudinal axis;

an extendible and retractable holding pin located internal to at least a portion of the shaft distal end; and

a spring coupled to the holding pin and located internal to at least a portion of the shaft and biasing the pin toward retraction along a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis of the shaft;

wherein a holding pin distal end of the holding pin is bent downwardly such that the holding pin distal end prevents the holding pin from being entirely retracted within the shaft under the bias;

wherein the holding pin engages and disengages a corresponding holding pin device hole of the device;

wherein the spring spring-loads the holding pin toward at least one shaft distal end surface of the shaft distal end such that when the holding pin is engaged with the corresponding holding pin device hole, the spring spring-loads at least one surface of the device to at least one of the shaft distal end surfaces.

13. (original) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein

the holding pin extends through the shaft distal end in a direction along a longitudinal axis of the shaft.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the device comprises the first baseplate and the second baseplate, and wherein the holding pin engages and disengages a corresponding holding pin baseplate hole of at least one of the baseplates.

15. (original) The apparatus according to claim 12, the apparatus further comprising a flange mechanically coupled to the holding pin, wherein exerting pressure on the flange in a distal direction overcomes the bias of the spring to space the holding pin at a distance from the shaft distal end.

16. (original) The apparatus according to claim 15, the apparatus further comprising a knob coupled to the shaft, wherein rotation of the knob moves the flange such that the holding pin moves closer to the shaft distal end, and wherein reverse rotation of the knob moves the flange such that the holding pin moves away from the shaft distal end.

17. (original) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the knob is threaded to the shaft.

18. (original) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein interference between threads of the knob and threads of the shaft lock the holding pin in position.

19. (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim

12, wherein the first and second baseplates of the orthopedic device are joined by a central coupling that enables the first and second baseplates to rotate and angulate relative to one another.